March comes in like a lion

Chica Umino

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QC	kiwiish

Publisher	Hakusensha
Magazine	Young Animal

3月のライオン

Chapter 9

A Contract

He was a friend of my father.

.....
ON TOP OF THAT.
IT LOOKED LIKE I COULD PLACE YOU IN CHECKMATE HERE IN THE 1ST COLUMN...
I FEEL LIKE I WOULD GET PLACED IN CHECK-MATE...
AH...
IF I TOOK THE DRAGON,
WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE THE DRAGON?
HM.
.....

NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT.
REI-KUN WAS HERE TO BE MY OPPONENT.
I FEEL BAD FOR MAKING YOU WAIT.
I HAD AN EMERGENCY PATIENT.
KOUDA, SORRY I'M LATE...
OH, GOOD WORK.

Even though he was my father's friend,
every time he came,
I would get nervously happy for no reason.

THOUGH I'D LIKE IT IF HE PLAYED OUTSIDE A BIT MORE.
LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEEN PUTTING A LOT OF WORK INTO IT.
IT FEELS VERY MUCH LIKE THE WAY YOU USED TO PLAY SHOGI.
REI-KUN MADE A VERY INTERESTING MOVE JUST NOW.
HE'S SORT OF LIKE ME IN THAT WAY...
I GUESS.
I just couldn't make any friends.
Whether it was in the neighbourhood or at school, I was always the kid that got bullied.
My father and he went to the shorei-kai together a long time ago.

My shogi wasn't very good,
but because it was quality time I could spend with my busy father,
I worked very hard at it.

Even though
he was an adult,
he would always
address me seriously.

...I knew this.

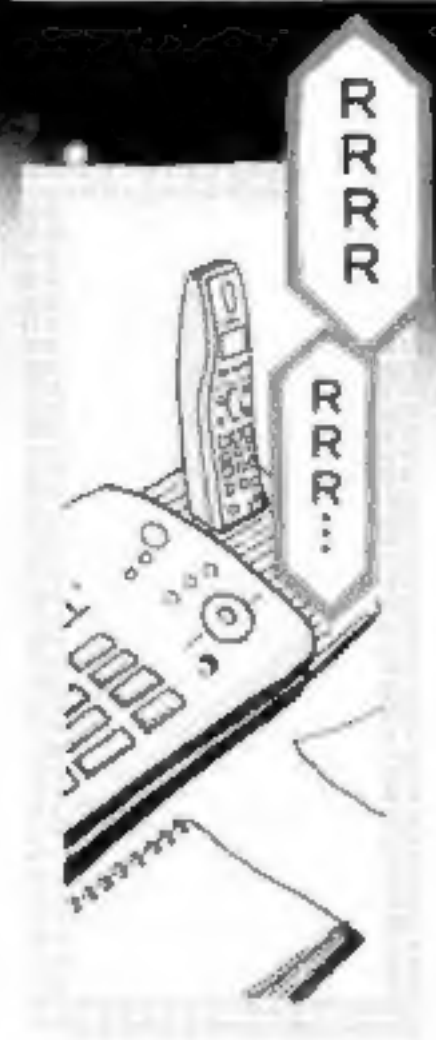
But each word that
the person sitting on
the other side of the
shogi board said...

left a deep
impression
on my heart.

I was never able
to take part in the
conversations of
my classmates.

No matter what,
I was never able
to keep up.

I always felt like
I was listening to a
different language.



He was the only one,
outside of my family,
who did that...

SHE ACCIDENTALLY FELL OFF THE STAIRS AND HURT HER LEG. WE'RE AT THE HOSPITAL RIGHT NOW.

SHE'S THE BOSS OF, "MISAKI", THE PLACE I WORK AT.

AH, YOU'VE MET HER BEFORE, RIGHT?

BECAUSE OBA, SHE...

EH?

YOU WANT ME TO PICK UP MOMO-CHAN FROM PRESCHOOL?

BOOK: SHOKU WORLD

I'M SORRY. COULD YOU DO THIS FOR ME?

OJII-CHAN IS STILL WORKING AT THE STORE.

HINA IS AT HER CLUB RIGHT NOW, SO I CAN'T CONTACT HER...

Comiiing!

Momo-chan!

Some-one's here for you!

MOMO-CHAN, WHAT'RE YOU SINGING?

Oh, umm

It's the car song!!

Do you know it?

TAB: MOMO

LOOKS LIKE SHE'S HAVING FUN.

Bun Boo Bun Boo Runda Runda

HELLO...

Ah! It's Rei-chan!! ★

IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD IT.

...NOPE.

Ah!

SFX: BYUNN (WHOOSH)

STOP THAT, SHIRO!

WOOF! WOOF! KYA! WOOF!

Wah~ What a cute girl~ Let's play~

Yahoo!

Kyaaa!! Kyaaa!!

SFX: HARU HARU HARU (RUFF RUFF RUFF)

KYA!

It almost fell into the river...

AH, GOT IT.

SFX: PAN PAN (PAT PAT)

SFX: KORO KORO KORO..... (ROLL ROLL ROLL.....)

AHH!

HEY! WAI-!!

NO NO NO.....

Momo's hat~!!

NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!

I like you! I like you!

WOOF! WO-WOOF!

SFX: HAFU HAFU HAFU HASU (PANT PANT PANT PANTS)

MOMO-CHAN!

SFX: BITJANN (CRASH)

SFX: HAFU HAFU HAFU HAFU HAFU OHUFF HUFF HUFF HUFF HUFF)

Hey~ Hey~
Hey~ Little girl,
let's play~
Hey~ Hey~
Let's play~

MOMO-CHAN!

WOOF

K-yaaa

SFX: BASSI BASSI (PAW PAW)

SFX: BATA BATA (PADDLE PADDLE)

LOOK!

WE'RE HOME, MOMO-CHAN.

WAH~

WUU...

UU

WUU

MOMO-CHAN, ARE YOU OKAY?

I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

IS YOUR FOREHEAD OKAY? YOU DIDN'T HIT IT, DID YOU!?

Ah... I made her cry... I'm sorry...

SFX: SHUN... (WILT)

SFX: GUSUN GUSUN (WHIMPER WHIMPER)

LET ME SEE.

...AHH, SAND GOT INTO THE SCRATCH-ES...

FU

UU

SNIFF

WHIM... PER

WE HAVE TO CHECK OUT YOUR SCRATCHES RIGHT AWAY.

MOMO-CHAN,

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE FIRST AID KIT IS?

ガラガラ

SFX: GARA GARA (RATTLE RATTLE)

OKAY, FIRST...

AND THEN...

DISINFEC-TANTS...

BAND-AGES.

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO *WOOSH* ON YOUR HANDS, OKAY?

Rei-chan, it hurts...

I'M SORRY. JUST BEAR WITH IT A LITTLE.

SFX: ZAA (WHOOSH)

Onii-chan!

REI-CHAN?

.....

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT SO MUCH.

REII-KUN,

AH . RE-ALLY...

KIDS FALL DOWN ALL THE TIME

Momo doesn't hurt anymore!

I'M REALLY SORRY

ABOUT TODAY

Huge lies

I haven't had dinner yet nya~

Momo didn't cry at all!

DID MOMO CRY A LOT TO WORRY HIM?

He barely ate any dinner...

Hey~ I'm thirsty Can you give me some milk or something?

REI-CHAN SEEMED REALLY WORRIED.

Hmph~ So bright

BOOK PICTURE BOOK

MOMO SAW!

THE TEARS CAME POURING DOWN.

BUT, REI-CHAN CRIED

REI-CHAN, HE ALSO HAD .

A YOUNGER SISTER.

EH?

WHY?

WHY DID REI-KUN CRY?

AH..

HE MUST HAVE. .

REMEM-BERED.

One day, my everyday life was suddenly torn to pieces...

When they came home from their trip, my precious father, mother, and little sister... they had become cold, hard, mottled bodies.

AND OJII-SAMA IS ALREADY SO OLD

NO WAY. SHE WOULD NEVER DO THAT ON HER OWN

ISN'T HIS FATHER'S YOUNGER SISTER, KIWAKO-SAN, GOING TO ADOPT HIM?

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THEIR SON?

ALL THREE [redacted] IMMEDI-ATELY.

I HEAR THAT THEY WERE HIT BY A DRUNK TRUCK DRIVER.

BUT OTOU-SAN ONLY HAD EYES FOR ONI-SAN.

THAT'S RIGHT ISN'T THAT WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING SINCE THE BEGINNING?

OTOU-SAN, IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU STILL HAVE ME!

SOB

SOB

SOB

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!!

AND I THOUGHT THAT EVERY-THING WAS GOING TO GO WELL AFTER THAT

I HAD JUST GOTTEN YOU TO GIVE UP SHOGI.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO MY HOSPITAL!?

YOU FOOL...

I didn't know what kind of place an institution was.

...but...

POOR THING

REI-CHAN, I PROMISE I'LL FIND A NICE INSTITUTION FOR YOU.

No matter how painful it was at school up 'til now...

When I returned home to my warm room at night by myself,

I was able to relax.

...but if I went to a place like that,

when I returned, there would always be other people around me... even when I sleep...

I understood that,

out of the 365 days of the year, there would never be a single moment of "relief"...

...and then, he came.

At the funeral, many blood relatives had gathered.

But, at that time, only he who came into my room,

was so familiar to me that I wanted to cry out.

GOODNESS. JUST LOOK AT KIWAKO-SAN.

THAT WOMAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT.

SHH. WE'RE IN FRONT OF THE BUDDHA.

BUT-!

I'M SAYING THAT THE KIRIYAMA HOSPITAL WILL BE SUCCEEDED BY MY HUSBAND.

WHATEVER YOU DO WILL BE USELESS.

SFX: ZAWA ZAWA (WHISPER WHISPER)

DO YOU...

LIKE SHOGI?

This was the moment the contract was made.

Since then, the god of shogi and I...

YES.

For the first time in my life,

I lied...

in order to survive.

...and there was no turning back...

have been wrapped together by that ugly lie.

And so, the curtain

was helplessly dropped

and I became a child of a shogi family.

NOTES from the translators

Page 03

The *shorei-kai* is a society by the The Japan Shogi Association where players are trained to become professional shogi players. If players who entered before the age of 22 do not achieve 4 dan by the time they are 24, they must withdraw from the shorei-kai and cannot return.* The Japan Shogi Association normally only allows those who have gone through the shorei-kai to enter professionalism.

To apply to the shorei-kai, you must be the winner or runner-up of a national amateur Japanese tournament in the year of application and have a recommendation by a professional player.

If you entered before age 22, you are given 1 dan status upon acceptance. Players become professional at 4 dan.

* The ages differred with different sources so we are not certain of the exact age limits.